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Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family

Implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons

Report of the Secretary-General**

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I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 54/121 of 17 December 1999, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the implementation of that resolution to it at its fifty-sixth session through the Commission for Social Development. The Secretary-General submitted an interim report to the thirty-ninth session of the Commission (E/CN.5/2001/7), which focused on progress in implementing the priorities for action to further equalization of opportunities of persons with disabilities, as identified in paragraph 4 of the resolution. The present report should be read in conjunction with the interim report.

2. The current report is divided into four parts. The first section describes recent policy and programme initiatives related to persons with disabilities and is based on information submitted by Governments, intergovernmental organizations, organizations of the United Nations system as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The second and third sections examine progress in equalization of opportunities by, for and with persons with disabilities in selected fields of activity and with reference to regional frameworks for cooperation in Africa and in Asia and the Pacific. The fourth section considers substantive aspects of a framework for the fourth review and appraisal of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, which will be submitted to the Assembly at its fifty-seventh session pursuant to paragraph 7 of Assembly resolution 52/82 of 12 December 1997.

II. Overview of recent policy and programme activities

A. Activities of Governments

3. Paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 54/121 encourages Governments to take concrete measures for the further equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities by focusing on accessibility, health, social services, including training and rehabilitation, safety nets, employment and sustainable livelihoods in the design and implementation of strategies, policies and programmes to promote a more inclusive society. In response to a note verbale, the Secretariat received replies from 27 countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, China, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Finland, Italy, Japan, Lebanon, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Maldives, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, the Sudan, Syria, Thailand, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. Information provided suggests that much governmental action centres on measures to implement relevant United Nations resolutions and agreed international standards with special attention being paid to accessibility, health and social services, employment and sustainable livelihoods. Strategies to promote inclusive societies and information campaigns to raise awareness of disability issues receive mention.

1. Accessibility

4. Since the adoption of resolution 54/121, approximately one-half of reporting countries have implemented national plans, specific programmes or legislation addressing environmental accessibility and accessibility to information technology. Many countries have developed stricter accessibility regulations for public buildings and there is a growing trend towards the adoption of regulations and policies to provide increased access to the Internet and to telecommunications systems.

5. In the Czech Republic, accessibility is considered under the National Plan for the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (Prague, 1998) in its "barrier-free living" chapter, which deals with both environmental, information and communications aspects. Spain also addresses accessibility concerns in connection with independent living and barrier-free access to transportation and communications, in both its policy and legislation (Law 13/82, in particular). In Finland, the Government has incorporated a target to promote accessible environments and independent living in its Target and Action Plan for Social Welfare and Health Care for 2002-2003. Under the Finnish Services for the Disabled Act, persons with hearing or speech impairments are entitled to interpreter services of 120 hours per year and deaf-blind persons are entitled to 240 hours. In Poland, in 1997, the *Seym* (Parliament) adopted the Charter of Rights of Disabled Persons, which specifies the right to live in environments free of functional barriers. Poland has acted to facilitate access to information and communications by persons with

disabilities under its "Computer for Homer" programme, which provides financial assistance for the acquisition of equipment and software. The National Secretariat for the Rehabilitation and Integration of People with Disabilities of Portugal has established a comprehensive site on the world wide web (http://www.snripd.mts.gov.pt) providing access to bibliographic information, including legislation and government publications, statistics and information on events, technical aids, accessibility and rehabilitation institutions and programmes. In Malta the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities has published a guide entitled: *Access for All* (December 2000 — http://www.knpd.org/xsguidelines/xsgl.htm), which provides guidance for the design of new buildings and for modifications to old buildings. The Commission reached agreement with Planning Authority of Malta whereby, from 1 January 2000, major buildings open to the public are granted a permit only if the Commission certifies that its accessibility principle is respected. Removal of physical and social barriers is a key element in the policies of the Republic of Cyprus concerning persons with disabilities and has been reinforced by its law providing for persons with disabilities, which came into force in July 2000. Accessibility to electronic and information technologies has been strengthened considerably in the United States of America with the entry into force, on 21 June 2001, of section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (http://www.section508.gov/docs/508law.html). The law requires that electronic and information technologies developed, procured, maintained or used by the Federal Government of the United States must be accessible to people with disabilities.[1]

6. In the Latin America and Caribbean region, both Antigua and Barbuda and Panama report the existence of national laws on the access to the physical environment establishing design and construction norms for accessible public buildings and spaces. In Mexico, accessible environments, transportation and communications have received new policy impetus and the newly-initiated Sistema e-México (http://www.e-mexico.gob.mx/) aims to bring new information and communications technologies to all Mexicans, with special attention directed to persons with special abilities. Among reporting Governments in Asia and the Pacific, in May 2000, Japan adopted a law for promoting easily accessible public transport and infrastructure for the aged and the disabled, which is significant for its comprehensive treatment of the promotion of "barrier-free" and non-handicapping environments. The barrier-free related policies of Government of Japan address not simply the physical environment and information and communications technologies but also the institutional, cultural and psychological barriers that persons with disabilities may face in daily life. In Thailand the Government has established an information technology (IT) subcommittee for persons with disabilities to deal with accessibility issues and promote development of appropriate accessibility technologies.

2. Health and social services

7. Reporting Governments describe a diverse range of social services and safety net programmes that have been developed during the period under review. In Croatia cooperation between the NGO, Association for Promoting Inclusion, and the Ministry of Labour and Social Care led to establishment, in 2000, of the "Home for Independent Living", which offers apartment accommodations and professional support and care to persons with developmental disabilities as an alternative to institutionalization. In Finland, development of social and health services for persons with disabilities has focused on supporting individuals in living independently in their own homes. Finland also has addressed, in its legislation, the status of informal caregivers. The Principality of Monaco has adopted a policy and measures aimed at promoting maintenance of residential living for persons with special needs, including persons with disabilities and older persons. The National Commission for Persons with Disabilities of Malta cooperates with the Ministry for Social Policy to improve day services for persons with disabilities. Social security for persons with disabilities is guaranteed in the constitution of the Republic of Poland and its Charter of Rights for Persons with Disabilities mentions the right to social security. Social services in Poland are governed by the Common Health Insurance Act, in force since 1 January 1999, which determines the range of services applicable to each affected person. In the United Kingdom the National Health Service plan, published in 2000, provides for improvements in provisions for people with disabilities, including a target set to increase, by 50 per cent, the number of people who will benefit from community equipment services by 2004. A White Paper, "Valuing People: a new strategy for learning disabilities for the twenty-first century",

published in 2001, sets out a programme to improve the life chances of people with learning disabilities, based on four key principles: legal and civil rights; independence; choice; and inclusion. The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 strengthens the right of children with special educational needs in the United Kingdom to be educated in mainstream schools and introduces the need to make reasonable adjustments so that disabled pupils are not put at a substantial disadvantage to pupils who are not disabled. Italy adopted Law 69, of March 2000, which aims to strengthen the integration of children with disabilities in schools by, inter alia, increasing allocations to the School Integration Fund.

8. The Office of Disabled Persons of the Republic of South Africa reports on interdepartmental collaboration to address a range of social services issues, in particular cooperation with the Department of Social Development on reforms of social security and consultations on the disability sector. In the Asia and Pacific region, the Government of Australia cooperates with state and territory governments within the framework of the Commonwealth-State Disability Agreement (1998-2002) in the delivery of social services. States and territories are responsible for managing accommodation support, respite care and community access programmes, such as day care, as well as for health care and related therapies. In China, rehabilitation and related services are provided within the framework of the five-year national plans. The recently completed work programme for disabled persons, under the ninth national plan (1996-2000), resulted in continued improvement in the situation of disabled persons. At the outset of 2001, the State Council promulgated the tenth five-year plan and associated work programme for disabled persons. In Thailand, social services and safety nets are designed within the framework of national development plans, the eighth national economic and social development plan (1997-2001) and the draft ninth plan, which covers the period 2002-2006. While medical rehabilitation is formulated as part of the national public health development plan, primary health care and disability prevention are carried out through a system of community primary health care centres, including participation by relevant NGOs in community-based services. In Thailand, safety nets for disabled workers are provided under the workmen's compensation act of 1994. A publicly financed health and medical care system in Japan provides for a range of health and rehabilitation services, including services for persons with mental disabilities. The Republic of Maldives has launched an early childhood care initiative — First Steps Maldives — that includes a disability component. In Latin America and the Caribbean, both Mexico and Panama have national programmes related to health, social services and social welfare, including special measures to support efforts of persons with special abilities in independent living. In Western Asia, the 1973 constitution of the Syrian Arab Republic guarantees the rights of disabled persons to health and social services; national social and economic plans concentrate on full coverage of services to persons with disabilities in all areas and regions.

3. Employment and sustainable livelihoods

9. Several policy trends are evident from the information provided: (a) empowering persons with disabilities to participate in the workforce by encouraging their inclusion in general employment, (b) enhancing participation of persons with disabilities by increasing vocational training programmes, and (c) providing financial incentives, including tax relief, to employers of persons with disabilities.

10. The Principality of Monaco introduced measures to promote the integration of disabled persons in the general labour market, including an agreement with the Employers' Federation to organize internships of three months. Participating enterprises do not have to pay the disabled worker during the internship period but do provide orientation and supervision. Since 1998 State and private enterprises in Turkey employing 50 or more persons have to recruit disabled persons so that they are a minimum of 3 per cent of the workforce; employers who employ more than the minimum percentage of workers with disabilities have 50 per cent of the insurance premiums of the additional personnel covered by Government. In Finland, a law came into effect in August 1999 that guarantees all severely disabled young people, between the ages of 16 and 17, the right to an intensified assessment of their working capacities as well as to rehabilitation and a higher rehabilitation allowance. Previously, severely disabled young people simply received a disability pension when they reached the age of 16. Portugal introduced a number of measures in 2000-2001 to stimulate employment for disabled persons, including support for hiring disabled persons and for local

employment initiatives. A recent decree concerns filling vacancies in central and local administrations and institutes, including, a 5 per cent quota for hiring persons with 60 per cent incapacity in situations with more than 10 vacancies. The State Fund for Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons in Poland provides financial support to employers who run sheltered work establishments, which includes co-financing or reimbursement of wages of disabled employees and subventions related to employment of persons with disabilities. As at 31 December 2000, over 3,400 sheltered work establishments employed more than 210,000 disabled persons, or about 30 per cent of all persons with disabilities employed in Poland. The United Kingdom recently modernized its Supported Employment Programme, which was renamed, in April 2001, WORKSTEP. Key changes include new eligibility criteria and priorities for people with incapacity benefits and targets for progression to mainstream employment. WORKSTEP focuses on individual development and makes greater use of job coaches and trainers, individualized advice and support, mentoring, as well as support to employers. Participants in WORKSTEP have contracts of employment and receive the same pay as the non-disabled people with whom they work.

11. Within the European Union, the new European Community initiative EQUAL (2000-2006) supports transnational cooperation to promote new means of combating discrimination and inequalities in connection with the general labour market.[2]

12. Information from Governments in Asia and the Pacific, Latin American and the Caribbean and Western Asia indicate that promotion of employment opportunities for persons with disabilities is addressed in policies and legislation and is given financial and technical support. Public laws in the Syrian Arab Republic set targets for employment of persons with disabilities in both governmental and private enterprises. In Asia and the Pacific, Australia has incorporated its "Disability employment assistance programme" in its general labour market and income support programmes, with a view to promoting choice and opportunities for employment for persons with disabilities. In Thailand, the "Rehabilitation of persons with disabilities Act (1991)" provides for the right of persons with disabilities to apply for work without discrimination and sets targets for employment of persons with disabilities in governmental offices and State enterprises. Persons with disabilities who wish to pursue self-employment opportunities in Thailand can apply for long-term interest-free loans from the "Rehabilitation of persons with disabilities Fund". Employment service facilities for persons with disabilities in China are available at all levels and are organized in accordance with the five-year work programme for disabled persons. The law for employment, promotion of employment of persons with disabilities in Japan stipulates, from 1 July 1998, the percentage of persons with disabilities that national and local governments are to employ; guidance centres on employment of persons with disabilities have been established, to date, in 18 public employment security offices; and grants and tax relief are available to enterprises employing persons with disabilities. An emerging area of investigation for the employment of disabled persons in Japan is the use of information technologies and tele-work, which is supported by a project to implement information barrier-free tele-work centre facilities. In Latin America and the Caribbean both Mexico and Panama have established laws guaranteeing equalization of opportunities to work for persons with disabilities. Additional support includes vocational training programmes and financial assistance, including in Mexico, access to micro-credits to acquire technical aids needed for employment.

13. The Office on the Status of Disabled Persons in South Africa is currently engaged in a coordinated effort in economic empowerment focusing on transforming sheltered and protected workshops into viable business and training centres.

4. Strategies, policies and initiatives to promote more inclusive societies

14. Several Governments report on national efforts to promote more inclusive societies. Some place emphasis on a broad human rights-focused approach while others report on thematic strategies. The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, proclaimed in December 2000, states that the Union "recognizes and respects the rights of persons with disabilities to benefit from measures designed to ensure their independence, social and occupational integration and participation in the life of the community" (http://www.europarl.eu.int/charter/default_en.htm.) Japan has organized its policies and programmes concerning persons with disabilities in accordance with the concept of a "barrier-free society". Four barriers

are identified: (a) physical barriers; (b) institutional barriers; (c) barriers to cultural activities and information; and (d) psychological barriers. South Africa has formulated an operational strategy based upon the human rights of persons with disabilities and development.

15. Some Governments report implementing plans and programmes providing aid and benefits to persons with disabilities. China and South Africa directly integrate poverty alleviation as part of their target goals for persons with disabilities. Both have integrated poverty alleviation for persons with disabilities into their respective national development plans. Other Governments report on national action plans and programmes that focus specifically on persons with disabilities, including the multisectoral "National Plan for Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities" of the Czech Republic; the medium-term "National Plan for the Rehabilitation and Integration of Persons with Disability" of Portugal; the 2001-2002 national plan of action for the rights of disabled persons of Lebanon, and the national action plan for disability, "From Patient to Citizen", of Sweden.

16. Other Governments have opted for institutional arrangements to promote social integration, notably the recent initiative of the Government of Mexico to create, within the Office of the President, a "National office to promote the social integration of persons with disabilities" and a "National consultative council on the integration of persons with disabilities". The Sudan has established an Office on Disability and organized, from 18 to 24 November 2000, at Khartoum, the "Fourth forum on disability", with participants from governmental and non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

5. Information campaigns and promotion of awareness of disability issues

17. Many Governments report on national awareness campaigns, which may range from a single day's observance to a decade, as is the case in Africa and in Asia and the Pacific. Often these campaigns are based upon the annual observance, on 3 December, of the International Day of Disabled Persons.[3] Some awareness campaigns are broad in scope, while other countries had a specific focus for awareness raising, such as the "Year 2000 Information and Awareness Raising Campaign" of Portugal, which focused on abilities of persons with disabilities, emphasizing their potential, productivity, participation, creativity and skills in the workforce. Other national campaigns are based on a single theme, as in Malta where the Government organized an extensive, week-long programme to promote awareness of its "Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act" on 17 January 2001. As discussed below, the proclamation of the African Decade for Disabled Persons (2000-2009) focuses on incorporating disability in the social, economic and political agendas of all African States. In Europe, on 29 May 2001, the European Commission adopted a proposal to establish 2003 as the "European Year of People with Disabilities". The proposal reflects the findings of an opinion survey in which 97 per cent of European Union citizens expressed the view that more could be done to improve integration of disabled persons into society.[4]

B. Activities of intergovernmental organizations

1. Asian Development Bank

18. The Social Integration Branch of Asian Development Bank addresses disability-related issues with reference to poverty reduction. During 1999, the Asian Development Bank conducted at its Manila headquarters a "Disability and Development" workshop to discuss issues of concern to persons with disabilities in Asia and Pacific better to reflect these concerns in Bank activities.[5] In 2000, the Asian Development Bank approved regional technical assistance to identify disability issues related to poverty reduction.

2. Inter-American Development Bank

19. The Sustainable Development Department of the Inter-American Development Bank organized, in conjunction with the forty-second annual meeting of its Board of Governors, technical seminars on "Dialogue on development and inclusion: opportunities for people with disabilities" and "Women at work: a challenge for development" (Santiago, 16 and 17 March 2001). The first seminar, co-sponsored by the Governments of Canada and Finland, focused on education and labour markets and infrastructure, transportation and urban design. The second seminar, co-sponsored by the Governments of Chile and Norway and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, focused on advances and challenges that women

experience in the labour market and examined options to expand labour market opportunities for women and specific social groups.

3. League of Arab States

20. The Ministries of Social Affairs of all Arab countries address the situation of persons with disabilities with specific regard to their economic and social needs and their human rights. The League of Arab States seeks to heighten public awareness regarding disability through media and social programmes. The League supports higher levels of education for persons with disabilities in order that they may achieve maximum levels of integration in society. New policies include an Arabic sign language dictionary, seminars and workshops for training resource persons in the disability field. The Arab countries of Africa participated in the creation of the African Disability Act of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). In cooperation with the Arab Organization for Persons with Disabilities, the League of Arab Countries is preparing an Arab conference related to legislation, poverty, education, health care, women and children with disabilities and transportation for persons with disabilities which is to be held in 2002. The conference is expected to adopt an "Arab Disability Act".

4. Organization of African Unity

21. In April 1999 at the twenty-second session of the Labour and Social Affairs Commission of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the "African Decade of Disabled Persons (2000-2009)" was proclaimed, aimed at empowering and improving the conditions of persons with disabilities, increasing awareness of disability and placing disability on the social, economic, and political agenda of African Governments. The African Decade was adopted by the seventy-second session of the OAU Council of Ministers and endorsed by the thirty-sixth Assembly of Heads of State and Government at Lomé in July 2000.

22. The African Decade directs special attention to equal access to education and development of programmes for appropriate and sustainable employment as key policy priorities. The Decade calls for effective support of interventions, addressing disability in ongoing crises such as the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and the provisioning of rehabilitative services and appliances. Plans for the Decade include the development of disability-sensitive planning and monitoring tools and training opportunities for Governments in order that they may better address and effectively include the disability perspective in their work. Work related to the Decade is being carried out by the African Rehabilitation Institute (ARI), a specialized agency of OAU, in accordance with its approved programme of work, and in collaboration with, inter alia, the OAU secretariat and the Pan-African Federation of the Disabled.

5. Pan American Health Organization

23. The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) uses its health information systems to define the population of disabled persons in the Americas and is also integrating Community Based Rehabilitation Strategies into its network of primary care services.

C. Activities of the United Nations system

24. The General Assembly, in paragraph 14 of resolution 54/121, requested the Secretary-General to include in his assessments of the implementation of the outcome of major United Nations conferences and summits to be considered at special sessions of the General Assembly, the contribution of these meetings to the promotion of the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities. During the period under review, special sessions of the General Assembly were convened to consider progress in fields of social development, the advancement of women and human settlements. In addition the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations was held from 6 to 8 September 2000 to consider fundamental values deemed essential to international relations in the twenty-first century and to identify priorities to translate the shared values into actions. From a disability perspective, the results of these assessments and outcome documents adopted are mixed: persons with disabilities do not obtain prominent mention in the priority areas identified in the documents adopted at the special sessions and the Millennium Assembly. In cases where persons with disabilities were cited in outcome documents, the presentation focused mainly on provision of services and care to the disabled rather than on their active role in society.

25. The twenty-first special session of the General Assembly met from 30 June to 1 July 1999 to consider progress in implementing the outcome of the

Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.[6] The report adopted by the special session discussed key actions to further implement the Programme of Action. The report included recommendations to Governments on improving management and delivery of services in urban agglomerations so that they meet the needs of all citizens, including the disabled, and on expanding youth and adult education with particular attention to people with disabilities.[7] The twenty-third special session of the General Assembly met from 5 to 10 June 2000 to consider progress in implementing the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action.[8] On the basis of the report adopted by the special session, the General Assembly adopted resolution S-23/3, which contains recommendations to Governments on further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action. In the resolution, women with disabilities are identified as being among the more vulnerable and marginalized members of society, whose concerns should be addressed in all policy making and programming.[9] The twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly met from 26 to 30 June 2000 at Geneva to consider progress in implementing the "Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action on Social Development".[10] In General Assembly resolution S-24/2 of 1 July 2000, recommendations were made concerning persons with disabilities urging Governments not to discriminate against persons with disabilities in efforts to promote quality education and health care.[11] The twenty-fifth special session of the General Assembly met from 6 to 8 June 2001 to consider progress in implementing the "Habitat Agenda".[12] The draft Declaration on cities and human settlements in the new millennium includes in addition to its renewal of the commitments made at Habitat II, the resolve to promote a range of basic infrastructure and urban services accessible to all, "including people with disabilities".[13]

26. By resolution 53/202, of 17 December 1998, the General Assembly decided to designate its fifty-fifth session which began on 5 September 2000, as the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations and to convene a Millennium Summit of the United Nations from 6 to 8 September 2000.[14] In preparation for this event, the Secretary-General prepared a comprehensive report on issues and challenges faced by world's people that fall within the United Nations ambit and set forth a number of proposals for consideration of the Member States.[15] The United Nations Millennium Declaration, adopted by the General Assembly on 8 September 2000, provides guidance for translating the shared values identified into practical actions; however, there is no mention of persons with disabilities in the document.[16]

27. Substantive activities of the United Nations system reflect a growing recognition of the rights of persons with disabilities and their contributions as agents and beneficiaries of development. Frequently these activities are carried out in partnership with Governments and the non-governmental community. For instance, the Non-governmental Organizations Section of the United Nations Department of Public Information organized a well-received observance of the International Day of Disabled Persons on 3 December 2000 at Headquarters, on the theme "Making Information Technologies Work for All". The Department of Public Information and its system of United Nations information centres and services effectively disseminate a range of documents and information products on the work of the Organization concerning persons with disabilities. The Population Division of the Secretariat develops official United Nations estimates and projections, which provide a demographic context for discussing trends in age-associated disability. Given the prevalence of disability in older cohorts, in 1998 the Population Division began to disaggregate all five-year population cohorts by sex for national, regional and global populations to age 100. The Statistics Division of the Secretariat focused on three aspects of data and statistics on populations with disabilities: (a) improvement of statistical concepts and methods; (b) technical cooperation to build national capabilities; and (c) improved compilation and dissemination of data and statistics on disability. Substantive aspects of the work on global statistics on disability are discussed below.

28. Pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/268 of 28 July 2001, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in cooperation with the Special Rapporteur on Disability of the Commission for Social Development, began examining measures to strengthen the protection and monitoring of the human rights of persons with disabilities and solicited inputs from interested parties. It may be recalled that the resolution urged that international norms and standards be translated into concrete action, which could have impact on the work of the Commission on Human Rights and on the

mechanisms it has established, such as country and thematic rapporteurs. The High Commissioner for Human Rights took measures to strengthen work on disability and reinforce the expertise of her Office in this area. This resulted in increased support for the work of the Special Rapporteur; and increased emphasis on the question of disability in the following areas: (a) United Nations human rights mechanisms, including special rapporteurs and treaty bodies, were encouraged to direct greater attention to the rights of persons with disabilities and (b) NGOs concerned with disability were encouraged to increase their involvement with Untied Nations human rights mechanisms.

29. It may be recalled that the Secretary-General established the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships in March 1998 to coordinate, channel and monitor contributions from the United Nations Foundation in support of the goals and objectives of the Organization (http://www.unfoundation.org/about/mission.asp). During the period under review, a number of UNFIP projects support directly, or indirectly, persons with disabilities. For instance several UNFIP-funded initiatives aim at assisting persons with disabilities as a result of landmines as well as promote landmine awareness and advocacy (Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Laos, Lebanon, Mozambique, Somalia and Sri Lanka). The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the Secretariat and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research are the implementing agents for these projects. The United Nations Fund for International Partnerships also funded projects related to eradication of polio, guinea worm, vitamin A deficiency and the promotion of salt iodization and measles immunization, all of which contribute to prevention of disabling conditions. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO) are the principal implementing agents of these projects.

30. Among the regional commissions the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) is placing special emphasis on promoting accessible environments and information technologies and on providing sustainable livelihoods to persons with disabilities. ESCWA is working with the Government of Lebanon and the non-governmental community in the establishment of a regional Braille computer training centre in Beirut. The initiative also is receiving assistance from the Government of Japan. ESCWA also has continued to organize pilot training workshops to promote the empowerment and self-reliance of, and sustainable livelihoods for, persons with disabilities, which have focused on starting a small-scale business, advocacy and promotional techniques and vocational training for young persons with disabilities. In cooperation with the Government of Lebanon, the private sector and civil society organizations, ESCWA has carried out the "United Kiosks of Lebanon", a project to create non-traditional employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. With regard to building for environmental accessibility in Western Asia, in June 2001, ESCWA published the Arabic version of the design manual "Accessibility for the Disabled". The English text is available on the Internet — http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/designm/. ESCWA also is implementing a Development Account-assisted project on training and advocacy in accessible environments in cooperation with the Municipality of Aley, Lebanon, which aims to make selected public buildings accessible to all.

31. The disability-related activities of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) continue to focus on promotion, support and periodic reviews of progress in implementing of the targets of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons (1993-2002), which will be discussed in detail in chapter IV below.

32. Among the funds and programmes of the United Nations, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), in 2000, initiated support for a two-year pilot project in Morocco on "Research and prevention of violence against disabled women and girls". The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is directing special attention to refugees with disabilities in particularly difficult circumstances. Data on the number, location and situation of refugees with disabilities remains a problem. Poverty among persons with special needs complicates chances for survival. In conflict situations persons with disabilities are less likely than their fellow citizens to leave their place of origin leaving them vulnerable and open to additional trauma. UNHCR is of the view that support should be directed to capacity-building and training rather than direct service delivery among refugees with disabilities. To reach refugees with special needs, the Community Services Unit of the Health and

Community Development Section of UNHCR has applied a community-based rehabilitation approach based on local resources and organized within existing structures (Kenya, Nepal, Pakistan and Uganda) in selected refugee camps. This approach aims to raise awareness, build self-sufficiency and facilitate health, education and vocational training within a framework of community participation. The disability programme of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) aims at improving access to services for persons with special needs and promoting awareness of disability issues. UNRWA community rehabilitation centres offer diagnosis, rehabilitation, recreation and training. UNRWA is currently examining more holistic approaches to social integration of persons with physical and mental disabilities. Since the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child,[17] the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), has shifted the focus of its work from the medical causes of disability to the protection of all children from the neglect and discrimination that often accompany disability. UNICEF emphasizes, within its rights-based programming approach, reduction of discrimination against children with disabilities through efforts to promote social inclusion for all groups of vulnerable children or children with special needs. Armed conflict remains a major cause of disability among children in many countries and UNICEF has produced a number of information materials, most recently an animated film, "The Silent Shout", that aims to prevent landmine injuries among children. The Innocenti Research Centre of UNICEF is now compiling research and studies on children with disabilities and conducting a comparative analysis of reasons for their exclusion; results of this work will be published in a forthcoming issue of the *Innocenti Digest*. The United Nations Population Programme (UNFPA) has a distinguished record of support for preventing disabilities related to childbearing through the promotion of safe motherhood programmes. The data indicate that obstetric fistula, which disproportionately affects very young women and women living in poverty, carries severe health and social consequences and should be considered a long-term disability. UNFPA, in cooperation with an international support group, is supporting work on prevention and treatment, with a special focus on access to emergency obstetric care.[18]

33. As the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, the International Court of Justice decides on disputes between States in accordance with international law and gives advisory opinions to United Nations organs and specialized agencies on legal questions arising within the scope of their activities. The case law of the Court contributes to the clarification and elucidation of the principles of international law, thereby enhancing the rule of law. The Court has noted that General Assembly resolution 54/121 expressed grave concern that situations of armed conflict have especially devastating consequences for the human rights of persons with disabilities. Judgements and advisory opinions of the Court dealing with questions of international law may be of some significance. In an advisory opinion given by the Court in 1996, at the request of the General Assembly, the Court found that "a great many rules of humanitarian law applicable in armed conflict are so fundamental to the respect of the human person and 'elementary considerations of humanity'" and that "these fundamental rules are to be observed by all States whether or not they have ratified the conventions that contain them, because they constitute intransgressible principles of international customary law" (*Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 1996*, para. 79).

34. Among the specialized agencies of the United Nations system, the disability programme of the International Labour Organization (ILO) focuses on promotion of decent work for women and men with disabilities. The concept of decent work is based upon the concepts of creating jobs, securing fundamental rights at work, enhancing social protection and promoting social dialogue. ILO reports that an additional 10 Governments ratified ILO Convention No. 159 on Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons (1983) during the period 1999-2001 (Bahrain, Côte d'Ivoire, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Trinidad and Tobago, Italy, Lebanon, Turkey, Luxembourg, and Mexico). During 2000-2001, ILO cooperated with the World Health Organization (WHO) in producing a series of publications, guidelines and manuals on mental health and work (in cooperation with the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health), management of disability in the workplace and HIV/AIDS and the world of work. The technical cooperation activities of ILO were directed towards building national capacities to manage and for delivery

of vocational rehabilitation services, including community-based approaches (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Morocco, Russian Federation, Ukraine), establishment of national vocational rehabilitation centres (Palestine Authority, West Bank and Gaza Strip), and policy advice and assistance (Panama). ILO has also established a "Disability and Work" site on the Internet — http://www.ilo.org/employment/disability. In connection with the observance of the International Day of Disabled Persons, on 3 December 2000, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) premiered its video, "Empowering the rural disabled", which describes its experiences in providing entrepreneurial training to rural people with disabilities in Cambodia and Thailand. FAO also organized discussions on the integration of persons with disabilities in FAO field projects and programmes, and on the role of the media in portraying disabled people. The global "Education for All Assessment 2000" carried out by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/ed_for_all/index.shtml), included a thematic study on inclusion of learners with disabilities in regular education, which drew upon developments worldwide over the past 10 years. As follow up to the Dakar World Education Forum (26-28 April 2000), UNESCO has been directing special attention to inclusive education as a strategy to achieve the goal of "Education for All". The Section for Combating Exclusion through Education (former Section for Special Needs Education) is working on measures to include concerns of persons with disabilities within the entire education sector. The Section for Secondary Education, in collaboration with International Working Group on Disability and Development, is compiling successful examples of inclusive secondary education provision. To develop national capacities for inclusive education and facilitate networking, UNESCO organized subregional workshops for teacher educators in China, India and Romania; additional workshops are planned in the Dominican Republic, Latvia and Zimbabwe during 2001.

35. The International Initiative Against Avoidable Disablement (IMPACT) is sponsored jointly by WHO, UNDP and UNICEF. The Initiative aims to prevent and reduce the causes of avoidable disability in countries and, as a result, to alleviate poverty through sustainable efforts at the community and international levels, targeting rehabilitation as a key intervention in reducing disability. Activities are carried out at the country level by the Initiative foundations, established in cooperation with interested professional, academic, and non-governmental groups. There currently are 13 IMPACT foundations, located mainly in Asia, but also including the East Africa IMPACT foundation and a disability programme of the Palestine Authority, funded by IMPACT resources.

36. The focus of the work of the World Bank is promotion of economic opportunities and well-being of poor people with disabilities and the management of the social risks that they may face. The primary objective in the work of the Bank is to mainstream disability into its strategies, policies, programmes and projects, as described in the "World Bank and Disability" web site (http://www.worldbank.org). The Bank is currently introducing disability concerns into its "Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers" process[19] and has prepared technical notes on disability and poverty in developing countries, with emphasis on education, health, transport and telecommunications.

D. Activities of non-governmental organizations

37. Disabled People's International — http://www.dpi.org — and its member organizations work to promote disability issues as broad human rights issues. The organization carries out its promotional and advocacy activities by means of partnership with Governments, the non-governmental community and the private sector with a view to promoting implementation of relevant United Nations resolutions and agreed international standards concerning persons with disabilities. Its World Council and its international network, working in close collaboration with Disability Awareness in Action — http://www.daa.org.uk — and in partnership with Disabled People's International Europe and other interested regional and national disability organizations, launched a "Global Rights Campaign" to promote awareness and support for elaboration of a convention on the rights of disabled persons. During 2000, Disabled People's International, in close collaboration with other international disability organizations affiliated with Disability Awareness in Action, established a database of human rights violations perpetrated against disabled persons. Disabled People's International, through its African

regional member, the Pan-African Federation of the Disabled, cooperates with activities in support of the African Decade of Disabled Persons (2000-2009). Inclusion International (http://www.inclusion-international.org/) has been active in promoting and defending the human rights of people with intellectual disabilities and the inclusion of a disability dimension in international policy processes. Its recent work has focused development issues and links between poverty and disability. The independent European Disabilities Forum (Forum européen des personnes handicapées), acts as an umbrella organization representing organizations for persons with disabilities to the European Union and to European authorities. The European Disabilities Forum lobbies members of the European Union to include disability in their social agendas and to monitor the implementation of European Union initiatives in this regard. As a result of the efforts of the Union, 2003 has been declared the European Year of Disabled Citizens. In pursuing a human rights, equality of opportunity agenda, the Forum supports the proposed development of an international convention on disability.

III. Progress in equalization of opportunities by, for and with persons with disabilities

A. International norms and standards related to persons with disabilities

1. Selected national experience

38. Several Governments have reported on the enactment of legislation addressing the rights of persons with disabilities. Finland made a revision to its constitution that entered into force on 1 March 2000, which specifically recognizes the rights of persons with disabilities. In April 2000, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland set up a Disability Rights Commission to advise the Government on comprehensive enforceable civil rights for disabled people. The Commission has four duties: to work towards elimination of discrimination against disabled people; to promote equalization of opportunities for disabled people; to encourage good practice in the treatment of disabled people; and to keep under review the implementation of the 1995 Disability Discrimination Act. In July 2000, the Republic of Cyprus enacted a law providing for persons with disabilities, which provides for general protection of disabled persons, including the safeguarding of their equal rights and equal opportunities and the promotion of their social and economic integration. The law also provides for establishment of a Rehabilitation Council as an advisory body to Government. Lebanon adopted a law concerning the rights of persons with disabilities on 28 May 2000.

2. International cooperation

39. The principle of the universality of human rights provides persons with disabilities with the fundamental framework for the application of international norms and standards to protect and promote their rights. Within this framework, not only civil and political rights, but also economic, social and cultural rights should be promoted as an inalienable and integral part of their human rights.[20] In this sense the international norms and standards relating to disability refer to the spectrum of international norms that could promote a broad human rights framework for the rights of persons with disabilities, addressing disabling attitudinal, environmental or economic realities affecting the lives of the persons with disabilities.[21] In brief, the international normative system is becoming a complex, dynamic web of interrelationships between international norms — binding and non-binding — national and international laws and various institutions. These increasingly complex processes, institutional arrangements and norms and standards form a nexus of institutions and mechanisms that address the situation of persons with disabilities and ways and means to promote their rights.

40. General Assembly resolution 54/121 urged relevant bodies and organizations of the United Nations system to promote the rights of persons with disabilities. A great deal of that work was carried out in close collaboration with the Special Rapporteur on Disability of the Commission for Social Development. As noted briefly in his interim report (E/CN.5/2001/7), the Special Rapporteur organized an international seminar on human rights and disability, "Let The World Know" (Stockholm, 5-9 November 2000). The report on that seminar has been published on the "Persons with Disabilities" web site at the United Nations — http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/stockholmnov2000.htm. Seminar participants focused on means to make international norms more accessible and to promote the

rights of persons with disabilities. Participants expressed the view that:

(a) United Nations human rights mechanisms and their present constraints and potential for adjudication of the human rights of persons with disabilities have not been fully explored by legal experts and advocates for the rights of persons with disabilities;

(b) Accessibility to institutional resources for utilizing legal, administrative or other official procedures to adjudicate the rights of persons with disabilities is vital;

(c) Improved access to and enhanced use by national judicial systems, as appropriate, of relevant international law in domestic courts is needed;

(d) Capacity-building in the disability community as well as in other concerned sectors of society is important in order to improve consideration of disability rights issues in the judicial and administrative forums and to promote general awareness and inform both the disability community and society as a whole about the human rights of persons with disabilities;

(e) Networking among disability organizations and their advocates with NGOs, academic institutions, legal experts and practitioners can contribute to creation of a sense of an integrated community of interests, from which an agenda for action could be formulated and priorities set to protect and promote the rights of persons with disabilities.

41. To provide a forum for the exchange of views on emerging issues concerning a broad human rights framework and persons with disabilities and to identify further options to promote their rights, on 9 February 2001, the Division for Social Policy and Development of the Secretariat organized an Informal Consultative Meeting on International Norms and Standards for Persons with Disabilities. The meeting brought together members of Permanent Missions and substantive representatives of concerned intergovernmental organizations, and the United Nations system, as well as the non-governmental community, for an exchange of views. The Special Rapporteur on Disability, who chaired the meeting, noted in his closing remarks that the focus of further work should be on identifying: (a) what actions are required to further the rights of persons with disabilities; and (b) harmonizing options to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities, for which the elaboration of a convention represents a special issue. He added that, as efforts are made to use existing instruments to further more effectively the rights of persons with disabilities in mainstream human rights mechanisms, the issue of elaborating a convention requires careful study. The report of the meeting is available at the "Persons with Disabilities" web site of the United Nations — http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/consultnyfeb2001.htm.

42. During the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on Human Rights in April 2001, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights organized informal consultations on human rights and disabilities with members of Permanent Missions and delegates to the Commission, including national human rights commissions, representatives of intergovernmental organizations, United Nations bodies and organizations as well as NGOs and national institutions. The consultation reaffirmed the importance of the human rights dimension in issues related to disability and recommended a strengthened link between the activities of the Special Rapporteur on Disability, the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Commission on Human Rights. The consultations provided a forum for national institutions to share national experiences in protecting and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities and further strengthened efforts of the non-governmental community to work more closely with international human rights mechanisms and national human rights institutions.

B. Global statistics and indicators on disability

43. The critical role of disability statistics and indicators is emphasized in the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons: "Monitoring and evaluation should be carried out at periodic intervals at the international and regional levels, as well as at the national level. Evaluation indicators should be selected by the United Nations Department of International Economic and Social Affairs in consultation with Member States and relevant United Nations agencies and other organizations".[22] In 1993, the General Assembly adopted resolution 48/96, which contains the

Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities — http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/dissre00.htm. Rule 20, National monitoring and evaluation of disability programmes, notes that "States are responsible for the continuous monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of national programmes and services concerning the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities". In the third review and appraisal of implementation of the World Programme of Action (A/52/351; http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/disrawp0.htm), conducted in 1997, the Secretary-General noted that establishing a set of indicators to compare the situation of persons with disabilities and non-disabled persons is recognized to be of critical importance if States were to implement rule 20 successfully.[23]

44. In recognition of this and other issues at its twenty-eighth session, the Statistical Commission requested that the United Nations Statistics Division prepare a minimum set of tabulation items and core tables on disability issues for consideration by an expert group on the 2000 World Population and Housing Census Programme.[24] The Statistics Division issued several recommendations for the 2000 round of censuses, endorsed by an expert group in September 1996 and issued as a technical monograph.[25] The Secretary-General endorsed the recommendations, specifically endorsing a disability approach, rather than one focusing on impairments or handicaps, as it related to the WHO International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps.[26] The Statistical Commission, at its twenty-ninth session, endorsed the principles and recommendations and supported the new and revised sections.[27] For the first time, disability was included as a topic in the revision of the Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses.[28] The following broadly defined categories were recommended: seeing, hearing, speaking (talking), moving, body movement, gripping/holding, learning, behaviour and personal care.

45. With established principles on how to measure the population with disabilities, the third review and appraisal recognized four new issues of critical importance to assess the situation of persons with disabilities: "First, although comprehensive monitoring of all aspects of the environment as it facilitates the achievement or hindrance of all three goals of the World Programme of Action is clearly important, few countries systematically collect data on environmental variables. Likewise, the areas of life where the environment can hinder equalization of opportunity, such as independence, use of time, social integration, economic self-sufficiency and life-cycle transitions, also have not been systematically measured. Third, resource constraints can hinder the collection of data on all important topics related to disability. Fourth, the success of certain data collection efforts under conditions in which resources are scarce suggests the wisdom of setting clear priorities in any data collection effort".[29] Since the third review and appraisal, however, there has been growing recognition that consensus has not emerged as to how to statistically identify the population with disabilities.

46. Although neither instrument officially adopted it, both the World Programme of Action and the Standard Rules recognized the definition of disability of WHO: "any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in a manner or within the range considered normal for a human being".[30] The Standard Rules notes that the term "... summarizes a great number of differential functional limitations occurring in any population in any country in the world. People may be disabled by physical, intellectual or sensory impairment, medical conditions, or mental illness".[31] This was the approach endorsed by the Secretary-General.[32]

47. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 54/122, a substantive accomplishment of the Statistics Division was the completion of the "Guidelines and principles for the development of impairment, disability and handicap statistics", a forthcoming publication oriented to national statisticians to assist them in responding to the growing demand for data on disability. The publication addresses special issues raised by collecting and compiling statistics on persons with disabilities in national censuses and surveys, and in their analysis and dissemination for policy purposes. The expected publication date is late 2001.

48. The Statistics Division organized and hosted the International Seminar on the Measurement of Disability, in collaboration with UNICEF, the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of the United States of America (United Nations, 4-6 June 2001). The seminar brought together nearly 100 participants from all regions of the world.

Participants included experts in disability measurement from government and research institutions, representatives of the disability community and policy makers. The objectives of the meeting were: to review and assess the current status of methods used in population-based data collection activities to measure disability in national statistical systems, with particular attention to questionnaire design; to develop recommendations and priorities to advance work on the measurement of disability; and to contribute to building a network of institutions and experts, including producers and users of disability statistics, to implement the developments in this field. A publication will be issued as a report of the meeting.

49. With regard to national capacity-building, the Statistics Division participated in the subregional workshop on disability statistics for the eastern Asian region (Shanghai, 9-14 April 2001) which was organized by ESCAP, the United Nations Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific and the National Statistical Office of China. Participants came from the following countries: China, Hong Kong (China), Indonesia, Macao (China), Mongolia, Philippines, Republic of Korea and Singapore. The objectives of the workshop were to address the training needs of national statisticians with responsibility for producing disability statistics and of government personnel who require such statistics for policy formulation. A second aim was to bring together producers and users of disability data in countries of the subregion for dialogue and partnership on the production and use of disability data. A similar training workshop is planned for the African region in September 2001. The workshop will have access to the United Nations "Guidelines and principles for the development of impairment disability and handicap statistics" to use and to evaluate as a training resource.

50. In connection with efforts better to compile and disseminate data on disability, the Statistics Division published an Internet-enabled statistical reference and guide to the available statistics, specifically, on national sources of data, basic disability prevalence rates, and questions used to identify the population with disabilities.[33] Work continues on finalization of the United Nations Disability Statistics Database (DISTAT-2). DISTAT is a global database, including statistics, indicators and textual information from national data collected on disability issues.

C. Accessibility of the United Nations

51. The General Assembly, in paragraph 15 of resolution 54/121, expressed appreciation to the Secretary-General for his efforts in improving the accessibility of the United Nations for persons with disabilities. It may be recalled that the report of the Secretary-General on the capital master plan (A/55/117) noted that the United Nations is a well-constructed landmark building. Bringing the building up to current standards and codes, including barrier-free criteria, will take a number of years depending upon which development option Member States decide on. In the interim, accessibility provisions are implemented in conjunction with needed short-term maintenance and facilities development activities.

52. A study of the entire Headquarters facility was conducted in 1998-1999 in preparation for the proposed capital master plan for United Nations headquarters. The study indicated that the Dag Hammarskjöld Library building contained some of the greatest obstacles to accessibility. A specific plan was developed to correct these conditions. In September 2000, two sets of doors were altered to allow access from the major corridor into the Library at the first basement level. This included a power-assisted control. Similarly, doors were altered on the first floor, separating the Library from a connecting "neck" permitting access to the only accessible at-grade doors to the building. Additional items in the plan providing for better access to the Library include installation of Braille and audible indicators for the elevators, the lowering of controls, call buttons, drinking fountains, light switches and fire alarm controls, the installation of Braille signage and the installation of lower desks in the reading rooms for wheelchair accessibility. The plan also focuses on the replacement of inaccessible furniture in the reading rooms and stack areas and improvements to general access throughout all the floors for wheelchair accessibility. A complete renovation of the first basement men's and women's toilet rooms, which will allow for access for wheelchairs, is scheduled for completion by 2002. Modifications to the Dag Hammarskjöld Library Auditorium include a wheelchair platform at the top level and a new ramp and access corridor at the second basement level to the stage. Toilet room renovations on second floor of the Conference Building and the first basement Public Lobby of the General Assembly Building will begin during 2001, with completion

anticipated for mid-2002. The renovations will focus on wheelchair accessibility, signage and lighting.

D. United Nations Voluntary Fund on Disability

53. The interim report to the thirty-ninth session of the Commission for Social Development (E/CN.5/2001/7) discussed the emerging role of the United Nations Voluntary Fund on Disability as a source of venture grants to further equalization of opportunities in accordance with priorities identified by the General Assembly in paragraph 4 of resolution 54/121. The interim report also discussed project cycle activities of the Fund through late 2000. The current section provides updated project cycle data through June 2001. During the period of November 2000 to June 2001 the Fund provided an additional US$ 159,676 in grants to six disability-related projects. Projects supported during the period (see annex) were implemented by the non-governmental community (with appropriate endorsement and in cooperation with concerned governmental bodies or organizations) in Africa and in Central and Eastern Europe. NGOs continue to make important and valued contributions to the equalization of opportunities by, for and with persons with disabilities by means of catalytic and innovative projects in capacity-building and institutional development. Several projects deal with pilot (and innovative) action in their respective countries, while others focus on technical exchanges of skills and knowledge and establishment and development of networks for disability action.

1. Accessibility

54. The importance of information and communication technologies for development was considered at the highest levels of the international community during 2000. This is evident in the United Nations Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) and in the Ministerial Declaration of the Economic and Social Council on the role of information technology in the context of a knowledge-based global economy.[34] Moreover, the United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities provides, in rule 5, that "States ... develop strategies to make information services and documentation accessible for different groups of persons with disabilities". While rule 5 does not set forth specific and binding measures to promote accessibility, it continues to provide practical guidance for drafting policy options and technical design standards in the twenty-first century.

55. A major project accomplishment during the period under review was the successful completion of the first Latin American Seminar on Strategies for Implementing the Standard Rules in relation to Internet Accessibility (Mexico City, 4-7 June 2001) — http://www.worldenable.net/mexico2001/default.htm. The seminar was the initiative of *Fundación Mexicana de Integración Social*, and the Government of Mexico (*Sistema Nacional para el Desarrollo Integral de la Familia*). The seminar brought together nearly 30 participants from 20 Latin American and Spanish-speaking Caribbean countries to review and discuss issues and trends in Internet-enabled goods and services in the Americas and to consider their implications for further implementing international norms and standards related to equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities. The seminar directed special attention to issues of Internet accessibility and usability for all. Seminar participants were knowledgeable and experienced and included specialists in their individual capacity from governmental offices, NGOs and the private sector; all participants had a disability or direct experience of disability. Participation was at a high level, engaged and challenging in the consideration of issues, trends and options for further action. The seminar venue was provided by excellent facilities of *Tecnológico de Monterrey — Campus Ciudad de México*, in particular its *Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey*. A representative of the Government of Mexico, the president of the National Institute of Social Development, opened the seminar. Other resource persons from Mexico included representatives of Government's "E-Mexico" initiative *(Secretaría de Comunicaciones y Trasportes)* and its "Civil society" initiative *(Secretaría de Gobernación)*, a representative of Microsoft de Mexico and representatives of advocacy and service organizations in the disability field. Building on the substantive exchanges and workshops, seminar participants formulated country and subregional strategic plans to further realize Internet accessibility for all in Latin America and the Caribbean and adopted a declaration outlining a strategic framework on Internet accessibility in terms of policy advocacy, training and technical exchanges, pilot action and establishment of an open and

democratic network to promote Internet accessibility in the Americas. The seminar obtained additional support from the Opera Software Corporation — http://www.opera.com — which granted the seminar organizers a license to include a copy of its Spanish language browser on CD-ROM compilation of seminar proceedings.

56. In the project pipeline, awaiting final approval, is a United Nations Voluntary Fund-assisted project to promote awareness and capacities for "lean approaches" to accessible information and telecommunication technologies in the entire Central and Eastern European subregion. A subregional workshop on "Internet Accessibility for All" is planned at Ljubljana, Republic of Slovenia, from 3 to 6 September 2001, in conjunction with the sixth European Conference for the Advancement of Assistive Technology, which is being hosted by Institute of Rehabilitation of the Republic of Slovenia.[35] The workshop will provide a forum for exchanges of knowledge and national experiences in promotion of information and communication technology for development. The workshop is being organized in parallel with the Association for the Advancement of Assistive Technology in Europe conference in order to leverage substantive exchanges on issues and trends related to assistive devices to obtain new insights on effective promotion of accessible information and communication technology for all. The workshop is expected to produce as a final product a strategic framework for analysis and planning of accessible ICT in the Central and Eastern European subregion. The workshop is expected to facilitate establishment of a network of excellence to promote awareness and build national capacities related to accessible ICT.

2. Social services and safety nets

57. "Social services for all" is one of the priority themes of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development. In the context of a broad human rights framework, achieving social services for all assumes special importance: social services are essential investments in the development of human potential, they can further social inclusion and can promote full and effective participation on the basis of equality. For instance, a successful United Nations Fund-assisted project in Uganda implemented by People with Disabilities, Uganda (an NGO) in cooperation with the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, developed and tested practical and low-cost approaches to identify and assess children with disabilities to provide training to selected parents in Kampala and Mpigi districts. One result of the project was identification of many more children with disabilities than previously thought — an unidentified group lacking the means to obtain basic social services. A follow-up project assisted by the United Nations Fund will focus on further improvements in identification and assessment of children with special needs and on community approaches to treat more children. This will include systematic development of community support structures and development and testing of training materials to ensure the sustainability of social services for disabled children and their families in Uganda.

58. An emerging area of concern related to the situation of children and adults with disabilities and their families is de-institutionalization. This is particularly true in countries in transition in Central and Eastern Europe and has constituted a focus of United Nations Fund-assisted pilot efforts of the non-governmental community, in cooperation with the concerned governmental offices, during the reporting period. The data suggest a complex process of moving from institutional approaches to care to community-based social services; exchanges of knowledge and experience are advantageous.

59. An initiative of the non-governmental community in Hungary seeks to develop community-based social services for persons with psychiatric disabilities — a key issue for this invisible and often highly disadvantaged social group.[36] The Soteria Foundation, Budapest, in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Affairs and local departments of social services will develop pilot day care services for previously institutionalized persons with mental health problems. It is expected that a practical and effective model will be provided that other countries with economies in transition may wish to consider when formulating their own plans and programmes.

60. Other United Nations Fund-assisted projects awaiting final approvals address de-institutionalization through integrated schooling for disabled persons. Pilot actions will not only confront architectural barriers to accessibility but also psychosocial and cultural barriers to the participation of people with disability in social life. The data suggest that providing integrated

education for children with disabilities is a primary mechanism to prevent parents from sending their disabled children to institutions; integrated education eases the transition from institutional life to life in the family and community as well. In Albania, the Albanian Disability Rights Foundation, in cooperation with Ministry of Education and local authorities will promote inclusive education for children with disabilities in Durres for the school year beginning in September 2001. The purpose of the project is to pilot the establishment of inclusive education, based on integrative education concepts. One school in Durres will be made accessible and teachers, students and parents trained in inclusive education. National media activities to raise awareness of disability issues will be organized and the Government will be encouraged to implement legislation on inclusive education for children with disabilities. In Bulgaria, the Institute for Social Policy and Social Work, in cooperation with Ministry of Education and the municipal government of Smolyan, will develop and test innovative assistance to children with sensory and developmental problems, based on integrative education concepts. A holistic approach to inclusion will be developed and, in addition to the provision of direct services, the project will focus on building the capacities of the professionals involved, developing parental attitudes and skills in bringing up disabled children and lifting the social stigma associated with disability.

E. Development Account for the biennium 2000-2001

61. As described in the interim report to the thirty-ninth session of the Commission for Social Development (E/CN.5/2001/7), one of the 16 approved projects for the Development Account for the biennium 2000-2001, "Project H", involves capacity-building and institutional development for equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities. The project has three priority areas for action: (a) accessibility, (b) sustainable livelihoods and safety nets and (c) promoting a broad framework of international norms and standards relating to disability.

1. Current activities

62. One of the ongoing Development Account-assisted projects is being implemented by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and involves research, training and capacity-building for accessible environments, using the municipality of Aley, Lebanon, as case study. Aley was selected since it was a prominent tourist resort in Lebanon although a great deal of municipal infrastructure was destroyed during the civil disturbances. In an effort to resume its role as centre for tourism, the municipality of Aley is currently renovating its city centre so that it will offer reasonable levels of accessibility for all. ESCWA and the Aley municipality have conducted many meetings to set a strategy on how to conduct the renovation. Accordingly, a section of the old *souks* (public markets) and the *Serial* (a public building) have been selected as areas of intervention. The *souks* stretch along two long streets where the main commercial and recreational activities occur. Intervention here will require tackling the issue of accessibility on an urban scale. Streets, walkways and crossings will be adjusted taking standards for accessibility into consideration. The *Serial* is a public building owned by the Ministry of Interior. It houses a number of government offices, including the offices of the municipality. It has been designed and constructed with no concern for access or use by persons with disability. Universal design standards will be applied onto the existing structure and modifications will be carried out accordingly. The efforts of ESCWA thus far reveal that considerable technical intervention is in fact needed by, and is continuously being requested by, the municipality; intervention going beyond that allowed in the original design of the project. This may involve a review for further expansion later. The project initiative in Aley will serve as a model both for Lebanon and for other interested countries and territories in the region, particularly when accessibility intervention could be initiated at a local level and could be replicated at a national scale. The results of this project will be shared by means of a subregional training workshop with interested neighbouring countries and authorities where there is great interest but limited national capacity for accessible environments.

63. A major project accomplishment during the period under review was the rapid design, organization and conduct of a pilot seminar/training workshop organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) on leadership training for women with disabilities to further international norms and standards. The workshop was proposed in April 2001 as part of the larger "Asia-Pacific Summit

of Women Mayors and Councillors" (Phitsanulok, 19-22 June 2001). The project was designed so that a sharper focus would be accorded to gender-based approaches to development and the role of international norms and standards in promoting equalization of opportunities. The plan of operations for the project was finalized in early May 2001 and approval followed shortly thereafter. The seminar/workshop brought together 10 women with disabilities from eight Asian and Pacific countries, who also were full participants at the parallel Asia-Pacific Summit. The seminar/workshop focused on leadership training and the development of the advocacy skills of women with disabilities in order that they would be better able to engage in dialogue and promote disability sensitive policies, strategies and programmes with the mayors and councillors participating at the Summit, with a view to reinforcing disability concerns at local government levels. As a result of the seminar/workshop experience and participation in the Summit proceedings and working groups, the women leaders with disabilities contributed to improved understanding of disability-sensitive and gender-responsive policies, strategies and programmes of local governments. The value of these joint exchanges and interventions is evident in the consensus "Phitsanulok Declaration on Advancement of Women in Local Government" adopted by the summit at its closing session on 22 June 2001.

2. Pipeline proposals

64. Discussions are under way with representatives of interested Governments as well as NGOs on further implementation of Development Account Project H (2000-2001). The discussions have focused on technical exchanges on accessibility and on sustainable livelihoods.

(a) Accessibility

65. As follow-up to the Development Account-assisted Asia-Pacific regional training workshop on accessible tourism (Bali, Indonesia, 24-28 September 2000),[37] which provided a forum for exchanging knowledge and experience in barrier-free tourism and identifying multi-sectoral policies and strategies to promote it, a participant in that seminar has proposed organizing a regional training workshop for Latin America. The workshop proposal was drafted by the Association for the Development of People with Disabilities (APRODDIS), an NGO, in cooperation with the National Council for the Integration of People with Disabilities (CONADIS) and the Commission for the Promotion of Peru (PromPeru). The workshop is to take place in Lima in late 2001 and will focus on the formulation of a strategic framework for accessible tourism for all, training on the facilitation of equitable tourism for all citizens and creating a network on accessible tourism to encourage the generation of new ideas and the exchange of information.

66. To further equalization of opportunities in social life and development through accessible information and telecommunication technologies in the Central Asian subregion, a subregional expert seminar and workshop on Internet accessibility for all is planned in cooperation with the Academy of Management, under the direction of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic (fourth quarter 2001, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan). The seminar will provide a forum for the exchange of knowledge and national experiences in promotion of information and communication technology for development. In addition to formulating a strategic planning framework for accessible information and communication technology for all in the Central Asian subregion, it is expected that the seminar/workshop will establish a network of excellence to promote awareness and to build national capacities, skills and technologies in this field. The seminar will involve participants from disability-related organizations and Ministries responsible for technological development in the five countries of Central Asia: Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

(b) Sustainable livelihoods

67. Drawing on research supported in part by a grant from the United Nations Voluntary Fund on Disability, the Institute for Social Development Studies, an NGO, in cooperation with the National Development Planning Agency of the Republic of Indonesia and other concerned governmental departments and offices, undertook a study of the effectiveness and sustainability of United Nations-assisted community-based rehabilitation. The study was carried out following the mid-1997 financial crisis in South-east Asia with a view to examining the extent to which prior technical cooperation had responded to the changed economic and social conditions. The research found that while technical cooperation activities had continued to perform adequately following the

scheduled completion of international cooperation, the extent of the services established had not been realized in other sectors. Discussions were held on better approaches to planning and organizing social services and promoting sustainable livelihoods in communities. The proposal is at an advanced stage of formulation, including inputs from research scholars and practitioners with a view to organizing an intense interregional exchange on the question as envisaged in Development Account Project H (2000-2001). It is envisaged that the venue for the exchange will be South-east Asia in late 2001 and that it will provide a forum for the exchange of knowledge and national experiences between the world's leading experts in sustainable livelihoods, rehabilitation and the inclusion and empowerment of disabled people.

IV. Regional cooperation for equalization of opportunities

A. African Decade of Disabled Persons (2000-2009)

68. The Economic and Social Council, in paragraph 14 of its resolution 2000/10, encouraged international support for the African Decade of Disabled Persons to promote equalization of opportunities by, for and with persons with disabilities and to promote and protect their human rights.

69. In support of the Decade, the United Nations Voluntary Fund on Disability provided a grant to the East Africa Federation of the Disabled to organize a meeting on "Universal design and the United Nations Standard Rules in the African Decade of Disabled Persons" (Nairobi, 7-10 November 2000). One result of the meeting was formulation of a strategic plan for the Federation's activities during the African Decade. Major issues to be addressed include the need for capacity-building, promotion of awareness of the Decade, improved integration of all people with disabilities in the societies in which they live, poverty eradication and building networks, partnerships and alliances in support of the Decade.

70. The Pan-African Federation of the Disabled, an NGO, recently drafted a framework paper on the African Decade. The paper outlines a proposed set of long-term objectives for the Decade, expected outcomes, areas for priority actions as well as ideas on the overall organization and monitoring of the Decade at continental and regional levels.

71. The proposed long-term objectives of the African Decade include: poverty alleviation among people with disabilities and their families; awareness-raising on disability; putting disability on the social, economic and political agenda of African Governments; spearheading the implementation of the United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for People with Disabilities; and ensuring the use of the United Nations Standard Rules as a basis for policy and legislation. The expected outcomes of the Decade include governmental priority for the rehabilitation, educational and employment needs of persons with disabilities.

72. The priority areas to be addressed focus on Rules 16, 7 and 3 of the United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for People with Disabilities:

(a) Concerning poverty alleviation (Rule 16), OAU Member States are requested to commit themselves to include disability matters in the regular budgets of all national, regional and local government bodies; make provision for disability concerns in poverty reduction programmes and use access to basic services for persons with disabilities as indicators of progress. International agencies as well as NGOs are requested to include the disability dimension in all development programmes;

(b) Concerning employment (Rule 7), OAU Member States are requested to provide equal opportunities for productive and gainful employment in the labour market to disabled persons in both rural and urban areas;

(c) Concerning rehabilitation and appliances (Rule 3), OAU Member States are requested: to ensure the provision of rehabilitation services to children, women and men with disabilities so that they may reach and sustain their optimum level of independence and functioning and to ensure the development and supply of support services, including assistive devices and interpretation services for persons with disabilities.

73. As the challenges and the long-term objectives expressed in the framework paper are many and wide in scope, the Pan-African Federation of the Disabled has also drafted a business plan, which focuses primarily on creating awareness and on generating

commitments from African Governments to address disability issues. The business plan aims to empower persons with disabilities and their organizations so that they can act as strong advocates for their human rights and their rights to participation and equal opportunities in society; and to provide planning and monitoring tools and training opportunities for governmental officials so that they are better able to incorporate the disability dimension into the work of their respective departments. The business plan is divided into two four-year phases: the first phase focuses on building the capacity of disabled persons' organizations and their leadership as well as of African Governments. The second four-year phase continues the focus on capacity-building but also includes several important service delivery components.

74. The objectives identified in the business plan envisage that, by the end of 2009, the Pan-African Federation of the Disabled, in collaboration with Governments and other stakeholders, will have developed capacities and implemented mechanisms to facilitate the integration of disability issues into governmental development strategies, planning and programmes, as well as the coordination, monitoring and evaluation of these activities.

75. If these objectives are pursued the Pan-African Federation of the Disabled would expect the following outcomes:

(a) A minimum of 200 senior officials working in the African disability sector's continental and regional offices to plan, coordinate, monitor and evaluate disability programmes as well as train government officials on project management in the disability sector by June 2003;

(b) Business plans for the Pan-African Federation of the Disabled and the five African disability organizations, to be established by December 2003. These business plans will enhance effectiveness and efficiency as well as facilitating marketing and fund-raising;

(c) An estimated 200 elected leaders and senior managers from African disabled people's organizations should be trained in enhanced skills in leadership, advocacy, fund-raising and strategizing by December 2003;

(d) Improved organizational structures and work systems for the Pan-African Federation of the Disabled and five continental disability-specific organizations in Africa, to be in place by December 2004;

(e) Key performance indicators for African disability programmes, to be elaborated by June 2005;

(f) A model for promoting awareness and for marketing plans for African disabled people's organizations, to be drafted by June 2005;

(g) Monitoring and evaluation systems for disabled people's organizations and interested African Governments to be operational by June 2007;

(h) An operational database on African disability legislation, policies, programmes, research and related topics to be established by December 2004;

(i) Improved coordination of inclusive and exclusive disability programmes between governmental departments, disabled people's organizations and Governments, to be in place by June 2009;

(j) The Pan-African Federation of the Disabled involvement in participatory and emancipatory research and information dissemination, which is expected to empower disabled persons and their organizations to be operational by June 2008;

(k) Better integration of, and participation by, disabled persons in regional, national and local development programmes, such as poverty alleviation/eradication programmes, educational programmes and sustainable income-generating programmes, by December 2009;

(l) Increase of 50 per cent in the involvement of women, youth and parents of disabled children in the leadership of disabled people's organizations by June 2009, either within or outside current organizational structures;

(m) Sustainable training programmes consisting of organizational structures, curricula, learning materials, teaching aids and accreditation systems for (i) sign language instructors, (ii) sign language interpreters, (iii) students with sign language as their first language and (iv) students with sign language as their second language, to be available by December 2004.

B. Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons (1993-2002)

76. By Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) resolution 48/3, Member States of the Commission proclaimed the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993-2002, with the goal of full participation and equality of persons with disabilities in all aspects of life.

77. ESCAP organized a major review of progress in implementing the targets of the Decade, "Campaign 2000 for the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993-2002" (Bangkok, 11-15 December 2000). Meeting participants adopted the Bangkok Millennium Declaration on the Promotion of the Rights of People with Disabilities in the Asian and Pacific region. The key recommendations reflected commitment to collaborative action towards the fulfilment of the 107 targets for the implementation of the Agenda for Action for the Asian Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons and for the establishment, in Thailand, of the Asian and Pacific Centre on Disability, by 2002. Preparations were initiated for the organization of the high-level intergovernmental meeting to conclude the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, to be held in Otsu City, Japan, in October 2002. The meeting would focus on two main areas: a review of the achievement of the goals of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, in particular fulfilment of the 107 strengthened targets for the Agenda for Action for the Decade, and consideration of a framework for action beyond the Decade.

78. As follow-up to the Regional Training Workshop on Disability Statistics (New Delhi, 7-11 February 2000), ESCAP organized the second subregional workshop on disability statistics in Shanghai, from 9 to 14 April 2001, in cooperation with the United Nations Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP) and the National Statistical Office of China. One of the recommendations of the workshop was the adoption of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICIDH-2) framework for the development of questions on disability in the national censuses and in disability surveys at agencies and organizations responsible for data collection.

79. At the round-table forum on "Women with Disabilities", held during Campaign 2000, participants raised a number of issues, including the fact that women with disabilities often lack access to information on the disability self-help movements, that self-help groups for women with disabilities exist in only a small number of countries and territories in the ESCAP region and that basic human rights of many women with disabilities often are limited. The data available suggest that the situation for women and girls with disabilities remains critical and that the review of the preliminary analysis of the Beijing+5 outcome document called on Governments to address the special needs of disabled women and children with more vigour. The High-level Intergovernmental Meeting to review the regional implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, held in Bangkok in October 1999, emphasized that the needs of women and children with disabilities must be addressed within a broad human rights framework in terms of policies, the law and actual practice. Disabled women and girls form part of one of the more marginalized groups in the Asian and Pacific region and are most at risk of living in poverty. Less than 5 per cent of children and young persons with disabilities have access to education and training; and girls and young women face significant barriers to participating in social life and development.

80. Since the inception of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons (1993-2002), a number of developing countries in the ESCAP region have made progress in furthering the involvement of women with disabilities in leadership roles, self-help organizations of persons with disabilities and national coordinating committees or similar bodies. Full and effective participation of disabled women in decision-making and in policy development and management is premised on concerted practical efforts in public information and capacity-building — training of trainers in particular — so that women with disabilities as well as disability advocates are aware of issues, trends, norms and standards. In this context, the Secretariat and ESCAP organized, in conjunction with the Asia-Pacific Summit of Women Mayors and Councillors, a seminar on advocacy and development participation opportunities for women with disabilities and disability advocates from selected ESCAP Member States and an intensive leadership training workshop on disability norms and standards and implications for promotion of strategies, policies and programmes at local governmental level to promote equalization of opportunities by, for and with women with disabilities. The Asia-Pacific Summit provided an important forum

for dialogue and opportunities for technical exchanges among women mayors, councillors and similar officials on development participation and the transformative role of women in social life and development. Women with disabilities and disability advocates attending the Asia-Pacific Summit enhanced and informed the Summit proceedings, offering information and experience regarding effective measures to further full participation and equality with special reference to local governments. The final declaration of the Summit, the "Phitsanulok Declaration on the Advancement of Women in Local Government", contains consensus policy recommendations on reinforcing a disability dimension in decision-making and in local government.

V. Perspective framework for the fourth review and appraisal and emerging issues

81. As discussed in the interim report to the thirty-ninth session of the Commission for Social Development, the fourth review and appraisal of implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons will mark the twentieth year of international cooperation to implement that instrument, as well as the tenth year since the end of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, 1983-1992.

82. On the basis of guidance provided by General Assembly resolution 52/81, the Secretary-General would anticipate that the fourth review and appraisal will evaluate the extent to which structures are in place to implement the World Programme in the context of development. To the extent that these structures are not in place, the next critical question is how are these structures to be established. It is envisaged at least five critical aspects of such structures will be reviewed and appraised:

(a) First, the extent to which countries have specific policies and programmes designed to facilitate both community-based rehabilitation programmes and the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities is important. For instance, the third review and appraisal (A/52/351) documented the fact that, since the adoption by the General Assembly of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities in 1993, 85 per cent of countries reported the existence of a national disability policy.[38] The next review will ascertain whether this percentage has risen since 1997. The review will examine the implementation and practical application of norms and standards, as well as issues related to international law, such as the feasibility of a new international instrument on the rights of persons with disabilities;

(b) Second, separate from policies and programmes specifically targeted at persons with disabilities, inclusion of the disability perspective in policies and programmes designed to foster social and economic development is critical. The third review and appraisal revealed that out of 83 countries reporting, roughly two thirds indicated they had passed specific amendments referring to disabled persons' rights within general legislation, while 10 countries offered protection for the disabled only under special legislation. An increase in this number shows that the legislative mechanisms of countries are becoming models for inclusion of people with disabilities in all facets of life. At its thirty-eighth session, the Commission for Social Development, following its consideration of the second monitoring report of the Special Rapporteur on Disability on implementation of the Standard Rules, recommended that the Secretary-General "reinforce the disability dimension in mainstream technical cooperation activities", a fact which demonstrates the importance of this aspect in providing accessibility for all;[39]

(c) Third, the World Programme of Action states that specific criteria for evaluation of progress towards full participation and equality need to be elaborated, with periodic monitoring at the international, national and regional levels. Monitoring refers to the practice of setting goals and objectives and then establishing evaluation criteria to determine whether the goals and objectives have been achieved.[40] It is envisaged that the fourth review and appraisal will assess the extent to which countries have established specific goals and objectives for policies and programmes aimed at equalization of opportunities and criteria for evaluating progress towards those goals and objectives;

(d) Fourth, countries need to gather data periodically based on those evaluation criteria, thus providing a means of measuring such criteria. Indicators are those data elements that are believed to provide the best measures of progress. For instance,

countries can establish target goals for education and employment related to gaps between people with and without disabilities. Progress made by Governments towards the establishment of specific and verifiable indicators to meet goals and objectives will be addressed;

(e) Finally, progress is being made in the development of periodic monitoring systems to obtain these indicators. The third review and appraisal demonstrated that, in the four census rounds between 1960 and 1990, the number of countries including disability questions in their census grew from 3 to 84.[41] Progress in including disability questions in the 2000 census round as well as in surveys will be assessed.

83. In accordance with the World Programme of Action and with Rules 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the Standard Rules (Accessibility, Education, Employment and Income Maintenance and Social Security, respectively), the General Assembly encouraged Governments to focus on accessibility, health, social services, rehabilitation, employment and sustainable livelihoods as priorities for action to further equalization of opportunities.[42] With this emphasis, the five critical aspects of implementation structures will be examined for the target areas for participation, as mentioned in the Standard Rules. Thus, the existence of disability-specific policies and the incorporation of the disability perspective into mainstream policies related to each rule will be assessed, as will the implementation of monitoring, indicators and data gathering structures relevant to each rule. The issues of data and statistics on disability, highlighted in the earlier section of the current report, will also be addressed. Progress to harmonize disability definitions and to measure the components of accessibility will be examined.

84. Just as the specific target areas will be assessed, their applicability to specific vulnerable populations such as women, children, persons in poverty and persons with mental health issues will be evaluated. At its thirty-eighth session, the Commission for Social Development urged that Governments, intergovernmental organizations and NGOs place special emphasis on "... the human rights of persons with disabilities, children with disabilities and their families, gender aspects, in particular the issue of discrimination against girls and women with disabilities, and the situation of persons with developmental and psychiatric disabilities, with a focus on integrating such persons into society."[43] Accordingly, the fourth review and appraisal will consider disability issues for women and for a number of social groups, such as persons living in poverty, ageing populations and children. The report, however, will also consider populations comprising what has been called the "new universe of disability" — persons with mental health issues and those with active, acute conditions.[44]

85. Emerging issues related to medical research and disability may also be considered in the planned fourth review and appraisal. For instance, traditionally disability advocates have focused on serving persons with a particular identifiable infirmity, such as Usher's Syndrome. As more information about genetics becomes known, other issues are emerging, including genetic susceptibility to disability-related conditions, privacy and ethical issues.

86. The fourth review and appraisal will examine the context of demographic, economic, social and technological trends that have occurred since the end of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, in the light of data emerging from the 2000 census round. Some of the trends to be examined include: a general worldwide movement towards adoption of Internet technologies; adoption by several countries, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe, of market-oriented economies; increasing awareness and concern over the environment; a general move towards accountability for results in governmental programmes; and global ageing.

87. On the basis of currently available data, it is expected that the fourth review and appraisal will highlight several important developments in the field of disability at regional and interregional levels:

(a) Identification in General Assembly resolutions 52/82 and 54/121 of specific priorities for action to further equalization of opportunities, in the light of findings of the third review and appraisal (A/52/351);

(b) Active promotion and increased use of state-of-the-art and accessible communications technologies for distance collaboration, for instance during the first Latin American Seminar on Internet Accessibility (Mexico City, 4-7 June 2001);

(c) Successful completion of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons (1992-2002) and

initiation of the African Decade for Disabled Persons (2000-2009);

(d) Adoption by the World Heath Assembly of a new International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICIDH-2) in May 2001;

(e) Improved harmonization of monitoring efforts, as witnessed in recommendations of the United Nations Statistical Division on disability-related questions for the 2000 round of censuses and the treatment of data and classification issues at the "International Seminar on the Measurement of Disability (United Nations, 4-6 June 2001).

Notes

[1] Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of the United States of America also has resulted in increased interest on the part of the information and communications industry in accessibility, which is reflected in standard product offerings; see "Tech vendors seek access for all", Jennifer Jones, *InfoWorld* (22 June 2001) — http://iwsun4.infoworld.com/articles/fe/xml/01/06/25/010625feedge.xml.

[2] "Communication from the European Commission to the Member States establishing the guidelines for the Community initiative EQUAL concerning transnational cooperation to promote new means of combating all forms of discrimination and inequalities in connection with the labour market", *Official Journal of the European Communities* (5.5.2000).

[3] Pursuant to resolution 47/3 of 14 October 1992.

[4] See "Proposal for a Council decision on the European Year of People with Disabilities 2003"; and "Attitudes of Europeans towards Disability" — http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/soc-prot/disable/news_en.htm.

[5] The "Disability and Development" workshop (Manila, 13-14 October 1999) was co-sponsored by Government of Finland — http://www.adb.org/documents/news/1999/nr1999090.asp.

[6] *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

[7] See A/S-21/5/Add.1; "Key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development", paras. 31 and 35.

[8] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

[9] Resolution S-23/3 of 10 June 2000, paras. 5 and 63. It may be recalled in this connection that the Beijing Platform for Action addresses the situation of women with disabilities in several of its strategic objectives: Women and poverty; Education and training; Women and health; Violence against women; Women and armed conflict; Women and the economy; Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women; Human rights of women; Women and the media; and The girl-child: see, for instance, "Women with disabilities; lessons of reinforcing the gender perspective in international norms and standards", by María-Cristina Sará-Serrano (November 1999) — http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/women/wwdis2.htm.

[10] *Report of the World Summit on Social Development, Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.8), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

[11] Resolution S-24/2, of 1 July 2000; annex, commitment 6 and para. 92, which reaffirms the "Dakar Framework for Action: Education for All", adopted at the World Education Forum (Dakar, 26-28 April 2000).

[12] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), Istanbul, 3-14 June 1996* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.97.IV.6), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[13] A/S-25/2, chap. VII, sect. C, decision 2/1 — http://www.unchs.org/istanbul+5/declaration_cities.htm.

[14] The Millennium Assembly of the United Nations — http://www.un.org/millennium/. The home page uses frames in its design and does not validate as HTML 4.1 transitional and thus is not accessible to persons with disabilities.

[15] A/54/2000, para.12 — http://www.un.org/millennium/sg/report/.

[16] Resolution 55/2 of 8 September 2000 — http://www.un.org/millennium/toc.htm.

[17] Resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989 — http://www.unicef.org/crc/crc.htm.

[18] Research of the International Development Research Centre of Canada indicates that some 600,000 women die annually in developing countries from treatable post-childbirth complications; see http://www.idrc.ca/reports/read_article_english.cfm?article_num=249.

[19] http://www.worldbank.org/html/extdr/pb/pbprsp.htm.

[20] "Compilation of international norms and standards relating to disability" — http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/discom00.htm.

[21] Both de jure and de facto discrimination exist in many forms, ranging from subtle irritants to invidious discrimination, such as denial of equal opportunities for education, employment, shelter and public services as well as discrimination in social, cultural and political life.

[22] A/37/351/Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1, annex, sect. VIII, para. 194 — http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/diswpa00.htm.

[23] Measurement of a population that is deemed representative of persons with disabilities was recognized as important in accomplishing this goal. Because only after such a population is identified in data sources can indicators comparing persons with disabilities and non-disabled people be assessed. For instance, to compare unemployment rates between people with disabilities and non-disabled people in a census or a survey, a population must be identified as having disabilities.

[24] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1995, Supplement No. 8* (E/1995/28), para. 56.

[25] See United Nations Secretariat, Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis Statistics Division, *Part Two: Topics and Tabulation for Population Censuses* (ST/ESA/STAT/AC/51/2).

[26] E/CN.3/1997/14, para. 29; and World Health Organization, *International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities, and Handicaps: A Manual of Classification Relating to the Consequences of Disease* (Geneva, World Health Organization ISBN 92 4 154126 1, 1980).

[27] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1997, Supplement No. 4* (E/1997/24), para. 55.

[28] United Nations Secretariat, Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses* (ST/ESA/SER.M/67/Rev.1).

[29] A/52/351, para. 48.

[30] World Health Organization, *International Classification* ..., op. cit.

[31] Resolution 48/96, annex, para. 17.

[32] However, in a review of different disability models, Barbara Altman notes that many models view disability as an outcome of the interaction of persons with a functional limitation and their environments, not at the level of functional limitations — Barbara M. Altman, "Disability definitions, models, classification schemes and applications", chap. 3, in Gary L. Albrecht, Katherine D. Seelman and Michael Bury (eds.) Handbook of Disability Statistics (Thousand Oaks (CA), Sage Publications, 2001), pp. 97-122. Taking this argument further, the definition for disability used by an international non-governmental organization, which has consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, Disabled Persons International explicitly views disability as caused by environmental factors. "Disability", Department of Public Information notes, "is the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in the normal life of the community on an equal level with others due to physical and social barriers".

[33] The Internet site for United Nations disability statistics is located at http://esa.un.org/unsd/disability/. The site does not however validate as HTML 4.1 transitional and thus poses accessibility problems to persons with disabilities.

[34] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/55/3), chap. III, para. 17.

[35] The Conference site is located at http://aaate2001.ir-rs.si/.

[36] The project responds to Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/10 of 27 July 2000, which, in paragraph 4, calls for special emphasis to be accorded to: "the situation of persons with developmental and psychiatric disabilities, with a focus on integrating such persons into society".

[37] http://www.unescap.org/decade/tourism.htm.

[38] A/52/351, para. 27.

[39] Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/10.

[40] Basic parameters for indicators established the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons — http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/dpb19992d.htm.

[41] A/52/351, para. 45.

[42] Resolution 54/121 of 17 December 1999, para. 4.

[43] Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/10, para. 4.

[44] E/CN.5/2001/7, para. 72.

Annex

Projects supported by the United Nations Voluntary Fund on Disability

1 November 2000 to 30 June 2001, by region

A. Africa

1. People with Disabilities, in cooperation with the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development: development and testing of innovative social services for children with disabilities and their families, Kampala and Mpigi districts (Uganda)

2. Society of Abilities for the Disabled, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and the Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations (AGFUND): integrated school for the disabled, Kampala

B. Central and Eastern Europe

1. Soteria Foundation, in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Affairs: Day-care centre service for people with mental health disorders, Budapest (Hungary)

2. Institute for Social Policy, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education: social inclusion of children with disabilities through the establishment of a pilot centre for integrated education, Smolyan (Bulgaria)

3. Albania Disability Rights Foundation, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education: the promotion of inclusive education for children with disabilities, Durres (Albania)

4. Institute for Rehabilitation, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and the Association for the Advancement of Assistive Technology in Europe: Central and Eastern European subregional workshop on "Internet Accessibility for All" (Ljubljana, 3-6 September 2001)